



## **News Release**

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### **Utahns with Diabetes at Risk for Heart Disease and Stroke**

(Salt Lake City, UT) – Diabetes is the sixth leading cause of death in Utah. However, evidence is showing diabetes may actually be much higher on the list as it often leads to heart disease and stroke; the first and third leading causes of death among Utahns.

The 2002 Utahns with Diabetes Survey, conducted by the Utah Department of Health (UDOH), found that 60.5 percent of Utahns with diabetes also had high cholesterol levels and 56.8 percent had high blood pressure. UDOH also reports that over one in five Utahns hospitalized for stroke also had diabetes.

“Utahns with Diabetes are at a much higher risk for heart disease and stroke than Utahns without diabetes, but they can significantly reduce that risk by following a few simple steps,” said Nancy Neff, UDOH Diabetes Prevention and Control program manager.

***Be Smart about Your Heart: Control the ABCs of Diabetes*** is a campaign sponsored by the National Diabetes Education Program and supported by the Utah Diabetes Prevention & Control Program and the Utah Heart Disease & Stroke Prevention Program. The campaign is designed to increase awareness of the extra risk for heart disease and stroke among people with diabetes and the steps they can take to lower that risk dramatically.

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To reduce their risk of heart disease and stroke, Utahns with diabetes should follow the ABC's of diabetes control as follows:

A is for A1C: The A1C check provides a big picture of your overall blood sugar levels over the last two to three months. A high A1C means that sugar is building up in your blood. The suggested target for A1C is below seven. Have your A1C checked at least twice a year.

B is for Blood Pressure: High blood pressure makes your heart work harder than it should. For most people with diabetes, the suggested target for blood pressure is below 130/85. Have your blood pressure checked every time you see your health care provider.

C is for Cholesterol: Bad cholesterol builds up and clogs your blood vessels causing them to become narrowed or blocked. For people with diabetes, the suggested LDL cholesterol target is below 100.

In addition to following the ABCs program, people with diabetes should discuss with their doctor their A1C, blood pressure and cholesterol numbers as well as what they need to do to determine, reach and maintain their treatment goals.

To learn more about the ABCs of diabetes, heart disease, or stroke, Utahns with diabetes should talk to their doctor. For additional information, visit [www.checkyourhealth.org](http://www.checkyourhealth.org). A free information packet is also available by calling the Check Your Health Line at 1-888-222-2542.

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*The mission of the Utah Department of Health is to protect the public's health through preventing avoidable illness, injury, disability and premature death, assuring access to affordable, quality health care, and promoting healthy lifestyles.*